



John L. Salomone  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

131 CEDAR STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

**MAYOR STEPHEN WOODS**

## MINUTES

**NEWINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Conference Room L-101 Lower Level – Town Hall**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**July 23, 2013**

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The meeting was called to order by Mayor Woods at 7:00 p.m.

### **I. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **II. ROLL CALL**

Councilor Borjeson  
Councilor Bottalico  
Councilor Castelle  
Councilor Cohen  
Councilor DelBuono  
Councilor Klett  
Councilor McBride  
Councilor Nagel  
Mayor Woods

Staff Attendees:

John Salomone, Town Manager  
Chris Greenlaw, Town Engineer  
Jamie Trevethan, Executive Assistant  
Linda Irish-Simpson, Clerk of the Council

### **III. AWARDS/PROCLAMATIONS**

#### **A. Newington Parks and Recreation Lifeguards**

Mayor Woods read a Certificate of Recognition commending the Town's lifeguards for performing a life saving procedure on another lifeguard in July. Several Councilors and the Mayor thanked them for their service and recognized their extensive training, which allowed them to act in a calm and efficient manner in the emergency.

#### **IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She commented on the resolution on applying for a grant to straighten Garfield Street. Mrs. Lyons stated it had been requested by past Mayor Mortensen that all grant applications be brought to the Town Council prior to submission. She questioned if there was a written policy regarding who was authorized to apply for grants and if so, must prior authorization be given by the Town Council. She felt that if there were no rules some should be established and abided by.

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She wanted to thank the Town and the Parks and Rec Department for the senior citizen swim from 1 – 2 p.m. each day. Although only a small number of individuals use the pools at that time she had been told by several how much they appreciated the time in the pool since it allowed them to exercise for that period of time.

#### **V. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Bottalico asked Mr. Salomone if the pay loader that was allocated for in the budget had gone out to RFP yet. Mr. Salomone indicated he would get that information to him.

#### **VI. CONSIDERATION OF OLD BUSINESS (Action May be Taken)**

##### **A. Grant Funding, Garfield Street Reconstruction**

Mr. Salomone gave a detailed presentation on the proposed grant and the resolution before the Council. The reconstruction was extensively looked at during the review of the campus situation and the adjacent roads of Mill Street, the parking situation at Town Hall and the Library. The architect reviewed the area and stated the reconstruction could alleviate some of the congestion and parking problems as well as being safer. The Town Hall Building Committee evaluated the plan and felt it should be part of a road project and not the Town Hall reconstruction. The item was then allocated as part of the budget CIP process where it was discussed in CIP meetings. It was decided by the CIP Committee and the Town Council decided not to fund the \$500k in 2013. It was during the Spring of 2013 that money became available through CRCOG. Mr. Salomone stated that if the resolution was approved by the Council no funding would have to be allocated by the Town at the current time. If CRCOG approved the grant (in 5-6 months), Mr. Salomone would then have to get approval from the Council if the Council wanted to go ahead with the project and as to where it would be funded.

Mr. Salomone asked the GIS Department to draw up plans of the current road and the proposed reconstruction in the area of the ball field off Garfield and how the foul territory would be impacted. It was determined the new plans would allow for approximately 70,000 square feet of foul territory.

The Town Manager reviewed the cost of the project going from \$521k to \$2.4 million and why it increased. He indicated that he had put in an additional \$285k for a total of \$806k since the original number was for a bare bones project. The additional money would allow the Town to add more pavers, sidewalks on both sides of the street, better curbing, additional drainage, and decorative lights (same lighting as used in Market Square). Mr. Salomone stated that when using Federal/State funding, the costs were driven up by required guidelines set by the State for budget purposes. After reviewing all the requirements the additional amount of \$1.9 million was added; however, he felt the Town would get a better project at a final cost to the Town of approximately \$250k through direct taxes. If the Town decided they did not want the \$2.4 million the money would then be given to another Town in the area since the Federal government would not cut their budget by that amount. The downside also was that it would not be done for three years and would have to work around the current Town Hall project, if approved. Mr. Salomone indicated the deadline of July 17 was only to get Newington into the queue and the resolution before the Council could be tabled for another meeting with no impact on the process.

Chris Greenlaw agreed with Mr. Salomone's presentation and stated the State was looking over the shoulder of the Town and hoped the project would cost less than \$2.4 million. He explained that the Town must use the numbers given and unit costs based on past construction projects. Mr. Greenlaw stated that instead of spending approximately \$525k for a scaled back project, the Town would be spending approximately half of that amount and get many more amenities.

Councilor Klett took exception to the July 18 memo that stated "As you recall, this project has been fully vetted by the Capital Improvement Committee and the Town Hall Committee" because as Chairperson of the CIP, there was a short presentation made by the Town Manager to the committee recently and indicated the reaction of the CIP was neutral to the project. She was concerned about the safety of the road after reconstruction which was not mentioned in Mr. Salomone's presentation. Mr. Salomone indicated the information on traffic and accidents should have been included in the Council's packet, and he would forward the information to the members.

Councilor Klett was concerned that a policy decision had been made without going to the Council first to decide if they wanted to move forward on the grant. Mr. Salomone stated they knew the project was on the horizon in early Spring but the money was not approved until much later. She stated that former Councilor Bowen had asked for all grant applications to be vetted first through the Council since organizations were applying and getting grants without prior knowledge of the Council. Mr. Salomone stated in the past there had been a grant given to the Little League for lighting that did not go through the Council first but went directly to the State Legislature. At that point, organizations were instructed to go first through the Town Manager before going to the Council, which is what happens currently. Mr. Salomone indicated it was his job responsibility put grant opportunities in the queue as a place holder prior to approval by the Town Council. It was the responsibility of the Council to determine if the Town wanted to avail themselves of any funding.

Councilor Klett asked about the boring that was recently done, and Mr. Salomone stated it was done by the Town to determine if there would be any ledge or rock to be dealt with in the project since that would increase the cost of the job. The boring according to Mr. Greenlaw cost the Town approximately \$2k and was done by Connecticut Explosives.

Councilor Klett asked Mr. Salomone if there was any possibility of the busway having a stop where the 70 parking spaces were being considered. He stated that was not part of the busway plan since parking spaces even with the proposed 70 additional spots would be used to make the parking for the Library, Town Hall and Transition Academy more user friendly.

Councilor Borjeson stated that in a review of the Town Manager's job description he found it was Mr. Salomone's job to get the Town grants and it was not until June that the Town could have actually applied for the grant. He said that the money would go to another town if not Newington and felt Newington should get their fair share of it since it would allow for the Town to have a more comprehensive project at about half the cost projected originally. He explained there had been frequent discussions regarding the project in CIP going back to January along with the Town Hall project and was not a new discussion. Councilor Borjeson felt the Council had to be careful about crossing the line of what the Town Manager's job was and what the Council's job was.

Councilor Bottalico was concerned about the foul territory being so close to the road and a ball possibly going through windshields of parked cars or cars moving along Garfield Street. He also indicated the Town would have to pay for the parking lot, which would bring the cost of the project to approximately \$410k (\$160k for the parking lot). Mr. Salomone indicated the parking lot was an alternate and there was a lot of new parking being looked at by the Town Hall Committee because of the parking issue around Town Hall. Mr. Salomone stated that if the Town received a low bid for the lot when it went out to bid, the Town should then go through with the parking lot but if the bid was too high, the Town would put the parking lot as part of the Town Hall project to be done at a later date.

Councilor DelBuono stated she preferred the Council receive grant applications prior to them being submitted and had discussed that with Mr. Salomone. Regarding the Town Hall project she was concerned that since there was not a definite plan of what reconstruction would look like and with the projected road reconstruction, was unsure of how the planning would work for both and agreed with Mr. Salomone there were a lot of moving parts to the projects. Councilor DelBuono asked if the Council, in the future, could be made aware of any grants that were being considered, and Mr. Salomone indicated he would keep the Council informed.

Councilor McBride commented that he felt the Library and Town Hall should be considered part of the center of Town and somehow connected to Market Square. Regarding the slowing of traffic in the area he stated it could be done by installing a textured road surface which had worked in other areas. The

reconstruction of Garfield St and the Town Hall project were in the planning stages and difficult to talk about since no architect had been hired yet. There was a need for more parking around Town Hall and the possibility of moving the entrance of Town Hall to the Parks and Rec entrance was a consideration since there was a need for the Town Hall entrance to be more user friendly. However, Councilor McBride indicated that if the entrance was moved, the need for a parking lot there would be vital and the reconstruction would give the Town that.

Councilor Cohen agreed with Councilor DelBuono about informing the Council ahead of time of grants that were moving forward; however, she did not want to risk the Town not being placed in the queue when grants were available. Placing the grant request in the queue gave the Council time to review the project to determine if approval would be given at a later date. She stated that Part 3 of the grant application talked about safety issues and gave extra points for safety. There would be time at a later date to have the Police Department attend a meeting to discuss traffic and safety issues with the Council or to have the Parks and Rec Department review the impact on the ball fields in the area.

Councilor Nagel was concerned about traffic and safety issues, bus safety, tax money to be used for the project and felt the Town should only apply for a grant if the Council was sure the project was viable. He stated the improvements to Garfield Street with sidewalks, etc. would not go all the way up Garfield Street and would have to be considered as part of a separate project for the future. Councilor Nagel suggested a vote be delayed to allow the Councilors time to review the information on the grant.

Councilor Castelle commented the line of sight and curve of Garfield Street create a safety issue that would be resolved if the road were straightened out.

Councilor Klett stated in response to Councilor Borjeson's comments that it was due diligence on her part to ask the questions that needed to be asked and to stand up for the taxpayer when it came to spending. She felt it was important to ensure the taxpayers money was spent wisely. Councilor Klett agreed with Councilors' McBride and DelBuono regarding the discussion of the grant being done in a preliminary manner.

Councilor Bottalico made a motion to table the resolution for approval of the CRCOG grant for the reconstruction of Garfield Street and was seconded by Councilor Borjeson. The motion passed 9-0.

## **B. Consideration of Canceling the August 27, 2013 Town Council Meeting**

The motion to cancel the August 27, 2013 Town Council meeting was tabled until the next meeting for possible action.

## **VII. CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Town Hall/Community Center Architect Selection**

Councilor McBride explained the committee voted 5 – 1 for Kaestle Boos Associates of New Britain, CT to be the architect for the Town Hall/Community Center project. He stated the committee felt their presentation was thorough, understood what needed to be done since they had done previous work in Town and they came in with the lowest cost. Councilor McBride asked the Council to waive the rules, even though controversial, since delaying the vote by two weeks would slow the project down. The committee had been meeting twice a month in order to move the project forward in response to some criticism that they were moving too slowly.

Councilor Nagel asked who had voted not to confirm Kaestle Boos and the reason for picking another architect. Councilor Cohen indicated she felt the other architect gave an impressive presentation, would have done a good job for the Town but was comfortable with the committee's decision to go with Kaestle Boos.

Councilor Bottalico expressed concern that the two Parks and Rec Department representatives were to vote only on the Community Center and if allowed to vote on the selection of the architect, would be allowed to vote on the entire project. Mayor Woods indicated he would have the Town Attorney look into

the issue and get back to the Council. The committee vote for the architect would not be impacted if the representatives votes counted or not on the architect issue.

Councilor DelBuono had concerns about waiving the rules and after discussing with Mr. Salomone the possibility of delaying the vote and following proper procedures, she was assured the delay would not be critical. She felt the committee had done a lot of work on picking the architect and felt by delaying the vote until the next meeting it would allow the public to speak on the subject. Councilor Borjeson stated he felt the best decision would be to wait for two weeks and vote on the issue at the next meeting. Mayor Woods indicated it would be put on the August 13, 2013, agenda.

## **VIII. RESIGNATIONS/APPOINTMENTS**

Councilor DelBuono moved the following:

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of Frank Aieta as an alternate member of the Town Plan and Zoning Commission, in accordance with correspondence dated July 18, 2013.**

### **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

**That the Newington Town Council hereby accepts the resignation of David Lenares as a member of the Town Plan and Zoning Commission, in accordance with correspondence dated July 17, 2013.**

The motion was seconded by Councilor Bottalico. Councilor Borjeson was concerned the Council had not received a copy of Dave Lenares resignation letter and thought the Council should not vote on the issue until the letter had been received per proper procedures. The vote was delayed until the next meeting.

## **IX. TAX REFUNDS (Action Requested)**

Councilor McBride moved the following:

### **RESOLVED:**

**That property tax refunds in the amount of \$1,377.27 are hereby approved in the individual amounts and for those named on the “Requests for Refund of an Overpayment of Taxes,” certified by the Revenue Collector, a list of which is attached to this resolution.**

The motion was seconded by Councilor Nagel and the motion passed 9 – 0.

## **X. WRITTEN/ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE TOWN MANAGER, OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS, OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC**

None

## **XI. COUNCIL LIAISON/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

None

## **XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – IN GENERAL (In Person/Via Telephone) (3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT PER SPEAKER ON ANY ITEM)**

Don Woods, 82 Ivy Lane: He was concerned about the reconstruction of Garfield Street and the moving of the Community Center to the area where the ball fields were. The committee had never discussed the realignment of the street but wanted the Council to be aware it would impact the Extravaganza to some degree.

Dan Dinunzio, 153 Superior Avenue: He asked if there was a possibility of creating the 70 space parking lot without doing the realignment of Garfield Street and felt that at the July 9 meeting when the reconstruction was first mentioned, he felt some Council members had more information about the project than others, which troubled him. Mr. Dinunzio asked the Town Manager if the application in the present form would be granted to Newington.

Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive: She stated that the last meeting for the Town Hall project was not on the Town calendar and urged residents who might have questions to show up at the meetings to get answers. Mrs. Lyons said she was waiting for the whole picture of what might be planned for Garfield Street and still did not know if there were a set rules pertaining to grants. She would like to see set rules and regulations pertaining to grants and have the Council abide by them.

Madeline Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: She stated she did not think it proper as election time draws near for Councilors to electioneer during discussions to defend positions. The Councilors were elected to represent the Town and to look out for the public interest not personal interest.

## **XIII. REMARKS BY COUNCILORS**

Councilor Borjeson indicated the HUD grant was not received for affordable housing. He stated there was an organization called Housing Connections of Connecticut, funded by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority, which would fund locally driven high quality affordable housing. The organization would OK senior housing and would provide most of the services the Town was looking for and would be willing to talk to the Council about the program.

Councilor McBride replied to several questions from the public: 1) parking spaces: it was looked at during the committee meetings where one plan showed the Community Center across the street (inaudible) where it was decided it was too far from the ball field. He thanked the Councilors and Town Hall staff for the card and gift certificate he received for the birth of his daughter.

Mayor Woods responded to Mr. Dinunzio's question regarding the setting of the agenda and he explained it was set by the Minority and Majority Leader, Town Manager and staff. The Mayor indicated that even with written rules for grants the reality was that anyone could request a grant and at some point the grant would get to the Council especially if there was a financial obligation involved. He indicated in response to some Councilors having more information than others on the Council that he did not feel that was correct. With regards to Garfield Street he remembered the project was discussed at the Town Hall Committee meeting, at the CIP meeting, at the Town Manager's budget presentation and finally at the Council's retreat. He stated he felt it was the Town Manager's job to seek grant money and did not need permission from the Council since it was part of his job.

## **XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

Councilor Bottalico moved to adjourn at 9:45 p.m. and the motion was seconded by Councilor Borjeson. The motion passed 9 – 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Irish-Simpson

Linda Irish-Simpson  
Clerk of the Council

Cc: T. Lane, Town Clerk